

Michigan Judges Association

Founded 1927

President:

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April 19, 2016

President-Elect:

Hon. Paul E. Stutesman
St. Joseph County

Re: Support for SB 405-408

Vice-President:

Hon. Tracey A. Yokich
Macomb County

Dear Members of the Senate Families, Seniors and Human Services
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Hon. Pamela Lightvoet
Kalamazoo County

Treasurer:

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Ottawa County

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Court of Appeals:

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Today, the Michigan Judges Association Executive Council voted to support SB 405, SB 406, SB 407 and SB 408. We believe that these bills are critical first steps in combatting the pipeline of children who are not in school and who end up incarcerated. Without common definitions for "chronic absenteeism" and "truancy," there is no way for districts to gather data regarding attendance trends and to develop best practices to keep children in school. Currently, each school district is free to define these terms as it sees fit, which leads to a lack of transparency even within counties. As judges, we are required to make determinations regarding children's best interests, and it is clearly in children's best interests to stay in school and out of the court system. For these reasons and those expressed by the Michigan Probate Judges Association, MJA supports passage of these bills.

Thank you for your attention to this important legislation.

Very truly yours,



Hon. Laura Baird

Executive Director:

Timothy R. Ward